

WHEN YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH [vs. 8]
I Kings 19:1-8

Introduction. Elijah had had enough. We can understand his feelings, for we, too, have often been where we felt like we had had enough.

It can happen to anyone.

Think about Elijah.

He had challenged 450 false prophets to a showdown, and they had lost.

But this brave prophet now flees in fear before the threatening Queen Jezebel.

He turns tail and runs, like a cowardly dog.

What has happened to the courageous prophet from Mount Carmel?

Elijah's experience teaches us not only that the bravest and strongest are subject to limitations, but that past victories do not guarantee present ones. So there are times when we, too, join with Elijah, in saying, "I've had enough!"

If you want to have victory over this condition of despondency, the first thing you must do is:

I. Notice carefully the telling signs of having had enough.

A. An overwhelming or very unusual FEAR.

When fear controls you, rather than your harnessing your fear, you are in trouble.

Elijah had faced the possibility of fear of death before, but now his fear is controlling him.

B. Exhaustion is another sign of pushing the limit of your endurance; this should warn you that you are near the breaking point, and you need to do something constructive about it.

A sure sign of this is when you cannot sleep for several nights in a row, and you are tired and exhausted all the time.

Elijah was exhausted and reclining under the juniper tree. His energy was completely spent.

C. Another sign of having had enough and being burned out is WITHDRAWAL.

At a crucial time when he particularly needed the fellowship and support of other believers in the community of faith, he pulled away from it and retreated into a remote and desolate place.

When you are unusually depressed and feel that you've had enough the worst thing you can do is hide behind four walls of a room or under a scrubby tree in a remote area.

D. A fourth sign of paralyzing depression and crippling burn out is a pervasive feeling of MEANINGLESSNESS.

Elijah had reached the most drastic stage here-- a wish for death, or contemplated suicide.

Elijah asked "that he might die."

This is always a cry for help.

A sick lady in another state left a note something like this: "I can't take it any more. I tried and tried to get help, but no one seems to care. If this is all there is to life, it isn't worth it to try to go on. I've had enough. I don't want to live like this any more."

But let me tell you, my friend, there is meaning and purpose to this life as a preparation for eternity, and as finding satisfaction in helping others realize their happiness and purpose in life here on earth as well as in eternity.

JESUS CHRIST gives life meaning and purpose; but I understand how some who have no knowledge or faith in him are depressed with a sense of futility.

But it doesn't have to be this way!

II. We have already moved into our next main point of discussion in this sermon, which is **WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU HAVE HAD ENOUGH.**

I have just mentioned one part of the spiritual solution to which I will return later, but first let me say that there might be some other very practical things you can do.

A. Be sure that your condition is not self-inflicted.

Be sure that you are not oppressing others just as much as some are oppressing you.

Recognize that almost every evil might be some perverted good.

For example, there is a healthy fear that gives us skill and drive; but there is an unhealthy fear that takes away both skill and drive.

Most of our fears, however, are irrational and dangerous.

We should not be afraid of ourselves, of responsibility, of failure, or other people, or of old age, or of death.

Many people are afraid that God is against them.

B. Learn how to Harness your Fears:

They must be brought under control and used for constructive purposes.

When out of control, they become destructive.

That is why the psalmist says, "Fret not -- it only leads to evil." (37:8, Moffatt)

A leading milk producer used to advertize "Milk from contented cows." Remember that? But that's not just a slogan; it is a NECESSITY.

- a. Don't be ashamed of your fears.
- b. Learn as nearly as you can exactly what you are afraid of.
- c. Be sure you WANT to give up the thing you are afraid of.

Often your fears may produce illness which you use to gain attention or to gain power over others.

- d. React positively to your fears.
- Faith is that sort of positive reaction.
- Worry or fear is a kind of atheism.
- e. Remember that every fear, every trouble, every sickness, every temptation you may face has been faced and is defeated and overcome by Jesus.
- f. Surrender the thing you fear into the hands of God. Isa. 12:2, "I will trust and not be afraid."

C. Learn to Recognize and deal with your Anger.

Was Elijah angry? You bet he was.

- angry at the King and Queen.
- angry at the false prophets of Baal.
- angry at the true professing prophets of Jehovah

who had deserted him.

-- angry at himself for getting into this situation.

1. Anger is one of the earliest emotions experienced by infants and children.

When a baby cannot get his own way he may kick, stamp his feet, jump up and down, throw himself on the floor, hold his breath, stiffen his body, scream, cry or bite.

2. Sometimes this childish pattern of anger continues on into adult life.

When a given act is followed by a satisfactory outcome we tend to repeat it; this is a well-known principle of behavioral psychology, but it is certainly true.

But the mature adult has a different set of standards; he knows that anger, or a "temper tantrum" is not the best method of "getting results" in the long-run of life.

3. Many people do not know that anger is very harmful to the body.

Dr. John Hunter said concerning his heart disease, "My life is at the mercy of any rascal who can make me angry."

4. Notice the scriptural method of harnessing your anger.

Jesus was an example of controlled anger. When he was about to heal the man with the withered arm, he saw the hard faces of religious men who opposed the act because it was being done on the Sabbath.

He "looked around about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of heart."

"A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger....A wrathful man stirreth up strife; but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife....He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." (Prov. 15:1, 18; 16:32)

Eph. 4:26 says: "Be ye angry, and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath."

Dr. A.T. Robertson says that Paul here uses the

permissive imperative (be ye angry) and that he is saying, "You will find anger flaring up, but check it immediately as a teamster would draw the reins on frightened horses."

D. Learn how to Recognize and deal with your RESENTMENT.

1. This might be the soul's worst enemy.

How thick is your emotional skin?

Do you carry a chip on your shoulder?

Is there anyone you have not forgiven?

2. Notice the disastrous results of resentment.

a. While we think we are harming others in holding these spites and resentments, the deepest harm is to ourselves, not to others.

b. Many times these resentments are dropped down into the unconscious, the lid is shut on them, and they work havoc in many ways.

Once there was a young woman who could not raise her arm because of a secret desire to strike her mother. Her father had told her when she was a teen-ager, "You must never raise your hand against your mother."

c. Resentment breaks down the machinery of life.

It is like sand in the machinery.

Christian love is like OIL; and life works better with oil than with sand.

Christians who love, love OTHERS, and THEMSELVES. Haters hate others, and they also hate THEMSELVES.

d. They tell us that if a rattlesnake is cornered it will become so angry that it will bite itself.

That is exactly what we do when we harbor resentments; be bite and hurt ourselves.

3. The Christian way to deal with Resentment.

a. Forgive for Christ's sake.

As the Armenian girl forgave the Turk who killed her brother, when she recognized and treated him hears later. (Eph. 4:31; McCartney, 126)

b. Remember that the basis of most resentment is a touchy, unsurrendered SELF.

c. Every time the name of the person against whom you are tempted to hold a resentment comes to your mind, breathe a prayer for him or her.

d. Say everything good you can about the person with whom you are unfriendly.

"Love thinks no evil," I Cor. 13:4,5.

e. If you can, do as much positive good as possible to or for the person against whom you hold resentments.

E. Use the Resources of your Faith in God.

1. God provides the comfort of his presence. He never leaves you alone. God assured Elijah through the appearance of an angel, and through the still small voice.

2. God provides strength for the journey of life. God sustained Elijah through the cake of bread and water to drink.

3. God provides the awareness of other resources which were there all the time.

Elijah was reminded that he was not alone; there were 7,000 others in Israel still faithful to God; moreover Elisha was being prepared to succeed him so that his work could continue after he went to be with the Lord.

Whenever we feel that we have had enough, we can listen carefully and hear the still small voice of Jesus saying, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mt. 11:28). Prayer, sincere and frequent worship, confessing of sins to God, willingness to work with others in the church, regular reading of the Bible, and simple trust and faith in the power of Christ do more to keep Christians from giving up than most people realize. When fears come, don't panic.

When your knees knock, kneel on them.

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